

Division 70: Zoological Parks Authority, \$12 403 000 —

Mr P. Abetz, Chairman.

Mr A.P. Jacob, Minister for Environment.

Ms M. Finnigan, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Mr W. Starkie, Director, Corporate Development.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: I give the call to the member for Gosnells.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: My first question relates to the conservation initiatives at the Zoo, specifically the how much expenditure goes to the native species breeding program. From there, we might compare what is spent on non-native species.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the member to nominate the page number.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I start off by suggesting page 836 and to the “Outcome: Conservation of wildlife” and then refer through more specifically to “Wildlife management, Medicine and Research”.

Mr A.P. JACOB: This is the funding of \$2 464 000, which is going up to \$2 675 000. The total cost of services includes all costs associated with species management and maintaining the high standard of animal welfare and husbandry and animal breeding. It also includes some funding for wildlife conservation initiatives and breeding for release into natural habitats. There is also some provision for research opportunities.

[9.40 pm]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: My question was specific: how much money goes towards the native species breeding program at Perth Zoo?

Ms M. Finnigan: In response to that, the —

Mr A.P. JACOB: While my advisers are looking that up, I draw the member’s attention to “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators” on page 837. In the very first table at the top of the page, there are set targets of the numbers of threatened species’ offspring that we seek to breed for release into natural habitats. Perth Zoo is particularly focused on the western swamp tortoise, the numbat and the dibbler. Those figures are there.

Ms M. Finnigan: Minister, we will have to take the question on notice. The total figure for wildlife management and research is based on the native species breeding unit, but I will have to pull out the species management specialist work.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member want that on notice?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yes. Perhaps this further question might need to be on notice as well.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the minister clear about what information is required?

Mr A.P. JACOB: If it is on notice, I think it is up to the member. I am not being facetious—if it is on notice, it is actually up to the member to put it in.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: How much money goes to the native species breeding program at Perth Zoo?

Mr A.P. JACOB: We will roll that in as a question on notice; that would be the easiest. We will give that breakdown.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this supplementary information or a question on notice?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No B12.*]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: This also might need to be answered by way of supplementary information. I am interested to know the relative cost per animal to keep a numbat. I speak from some experience; feeding numbats is a very labour-intensive activity! What is the unit feeding cost?

Mr A.P. JACOB: They are not the easiest things to always source food for! We will probably be able to do a rough breakdown off these figures.

Ms M. Finnigan: Yes, we will be able to do a rough breakdown.

[*Supplementary Information No B13.*]

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 20 August 2013]

p206b-207a

Chairman; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Albert Jacob; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Frank Alban

Ms L.L. BAKER: I refer to “Program Rationalisation” and “Public Sector Workforce Reform” on page 835. I note there is \$150 000 next to “Program Rationalisation”. Could I have a bit of detail on that, and specifically also on the \$847 000, which is an enormous amount for public sector workforce reform?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I thank the member for the question. I will deal with the first question about program rationalisation. Both of those indicators are targets that have been applied across government. In the case of the Zoological Parks Authority, it has resulted in a reduction of staffing levels in the education program delivery. We are still delivering the program but it will be mixing up the type to more web-based applications; I guess using smarter ways to disseminate information. In relation to “Public Sector Workforce Reform”, this is a result of a government decision to cap agency salary costs at CPI adjusted for 2012–13 levels.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I thank the minister for the information about the employee changes. I am looking at the table on page 837 that refers to full-time employees under the heading “Community Engagement and Awareness in Conservation”. I assume that is the education section we were just talking about. It only shows a reduction of one FTE. That is one really well paid person if it is \$800 000 worth! On the flipside, page 838, under “Wildlife Management, Medicine and Research”, again there is only one FTE reduction. I personally think it is quite fabulous on both counts, but I am still trying to work out how that relates to \$800 000 worth of workforce reform.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I think in the first point, that was principally the first question asked around the programs, but I will throw that over to Ms Finnigan.

Ms M. Finnigan: The first question about the programs is that that is the manager of education position. The activities the minister refers to is the community-based awareness education programs that we run that are able to be resourced within a reduced staffing level. They include things like A-Zoo, Zoo camps, the community awareness programs and the behind-the-scenes tours.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Have there been significant reforms?

Ms M. Finnigan: We have reduced the formal-based education. That has resulted in non-formal or non-supervised education programs that the community, as well as schools, can enter into.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I refer to “Asset Investment Program” at the top of page 839. The first paragraph refers to the strategic direction of the authority. Further down, it refers to a 20-year development plan. Is Perth Zoo proceeding with an open-range zoo?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I thank the member for the question. Again, this one would come very close to the Swan Hills electorate given the discussions in and around it. Given my electorate of Ocean Reef, I can see some appeal!

Mr F.A. ALBAN: It is an opportunistic question.

Mr A.P. JACOB: Yes, a very good opportunity taken.

The notion of an open-range zoo has been in the Zoo’s forward planning for several years. At this stage there are no current plans to pursue an open-range zoo facility in Western Australia. The priority for this government is to ensure that the Perth Zoo site in South Perth is internationally top class. Over the past three years, this government has significantly funded the development of an integrated water system totalling nearly \$12 million, which will upgrade water services throughout the Perth Zoo site. We have also invested in the development of solar power throughout the Zoo, improvements to the Zoo’s wetlands and its penguin exhibit, and improvements to the front entrance, playground and visitor facilities. This year there will be new visitor viewing facilities at the orangutan exhibit. There will be upgrades to the breeding ponds for the western swamp tortoise, construction will commence on those water infrastructure improvements that I mentioned earlier, and there is ongoing planning for a variety of exhibits. As a northern suburbs member, I can see the appeal.

The appropriation was recommended.